

PIONEER PRESS

A monthly newsletter created by the residents, for the residents of ESH.

Seventh Edition, June-July 2008

poetry

Hoping and Asking

By Eric Edmonds

First published in

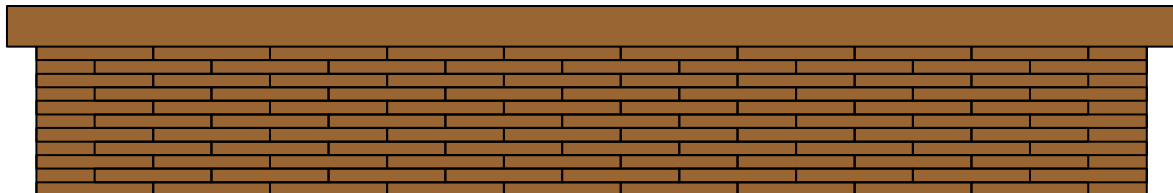
"Sky Bird Search" 2007

Just a man with shaking hands trying times in uncertain lands
Reaching out when there is no one there, the pain in my heart grows harder to bear.
Waiting for some good to come my way
Knowing that today is just not that day.
Hoping tomorrow will be better than now
Asking for strength to get through somehow.
Thankful for what's been given and for what's to come
When my days are up, hoping that I have given back some.

This Old Wall

By Jeffrey Moore

This old wall is the dwelling to my hall.
I lay awake with feelings to brake and a conclusion that I can't shake...
-This Old Wall-
Thoughts, they race but still I haven't embraced
-This Old Wall-
Does it continue? Is it numerous, No; scratch that it's an encumbrance
-This Old Wall-
Should I be scared of its shadow, as it peers with the width of a sleepy meadow, as it stands
steady as a model in her stiletto; holding the protection that's of a lioness to her cub, but has the
serenity and tranquility of two Turtle doves.
No... no need to fear
This Old Wall





Amber Main – “Recovery from Schizophrenia”
By Donna Leone

College can be tough under any circumstances. Add schizophrenia and you have increased problems. Amber Main is a Hampton University Student who is working towards Recovery after schizophrenia. She is 19 years old and recently appeared on an episode of “True Life – I Have Schizophrenia” that followed her life to battle schizophrenia. This aired May 22, 2008 on MTV and focused on issues facing young people.

She reported that schizophrenia can be a feeling that something is wrong; that weird, eerie feeling around you always, hearing voices and not knowing what to do about it. She had poor grades, disturbing behaviors, mixed up feelings, and major mood swings or Bi-Polar Disorder and then a diagnosis: schizophrenia. This is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain often confused as being caused by stress or hormones. She feared going to a mental institution or psych ward or hospital ward. Schizophrenia and Bi-Polar Disorder often require the use of anti-psychotic drugs, not always promising a cure, but at least a chance of preventing a relapse.

What does it take to reclaim your life after schizophrenia?

What does it take to recover from schizophrenia?

There are many Recovery Tools. First there needs to be an intervention – by a doctor and taking psychotropic medications as prescribed. Therapy and continued treatment are needed. Acceptance is what’s needed to begin recovery by both family and friends. Coping skills to maintain wellness and a healthy active lifestyle. Don’t do drugs and alcohol, and continue to watch diet and add exercise. A good support system is necessary. Being able to recognize warning signs. Spirituality is needed also. Those on the video describe how they came back from their dark days to a renewed life.

Recovery is a rebuilding of a life style and regaining of healthy balance in their lives. It is a rehabilitation. It is a balance of positive self-values and a person – centered self care. It is a process requiring the sharing of feelings between family and peers.

Amber now plans to continue working with NAMI's newsletter, “In Our Own Voice” and travel to share her story. NAMI invites you to visit its National Website at www.nami.org.

I Am a Turtle
By Jason Mintel

I am a Turtle, slow and steady, trudging down the lone road of destiny, but as I slowly plod a long, I see the hawk fly high above and I imagine how free that must be. I feel the wind against my wings. I think- I am so slow. So low. The dream of flying, stirs in me a deep yearning. I dream I am a Hawk flying, casting a shadow of a Turtle across the land. God let me fly! Just once! I will do anything to fly. I pray at my rock by the mountain. I stay there, still, in prayer for many days. I believe with all my might. I have not believed in anything so strong.

"You have a gift," says God.

I hear this and it gives me strength. I will fly! - but I need a place high to leap from. I begin the climb up the mountain. Slow. I pull myself forward; I am lumbering up past days and nights. I crawl rock. I feel the mountain's pounding heartbeat breaking me, every negative discouraging thought that screams to stop. I give it all I got and I finally make it to the top. My dream is about to be realized. I gaze down over the land and feel the love of God's wonders fill me, then I leap with a shout of praise off the cliff in faith. I soar through the air, I never have felt more alive, I am free! I am fast! I am high! - and then, gravity latches on and I fall plummeting down. I fall and fall, and I crash to the ground. I am bruised and torn. I failed! I failed when I struggled so hard to succeed. After I labored and toiled, I must be God's joke, so slow. So low.

"Why?" I cry out to God, "Why can't I fly? You told me I had the gift!"

God smiles at me and wipes my tears away, "Yes my child, all are given gifts. You have the gift of your hard shell. I knew you would climb up the mountain and dive off the top, to pursue your dream, unattainable as it may seem, and I knew you would fall. If you fell from that great height as a Hawk or even a Lion you would have been smashed and died, so knowing this was your fate I gave you a hard shell to survive. You did the impossible and achieved your goal, you followed your dream, more passionate and alive in one moment than in most other lives I've ever seen. You flew! It's true! You climbed a mountain and leapt off it and survived. The Gift of Determination. The Gift of Believing in yourself, of living your dream. The Gift of Perseverance. Now keep challenging yourself! We are travelers on this journey, we have different paths we seek, keep following your heart, for your only limit is your belief.

I am a Turtle, deep inside me a fire burns, I crawl back onto my rock and look at the sky, winking at the Hawk, the Panther, the Porcupine, the sun floating in the bottomless lake of sky, I fly.



Ground Dirt
By Jason Mintel

God, why am I still here? You give me this crumpled up map and expect me to find my way back? What is my purpose, what message do I project? Can you guide my hands in prayer together, so I may serve you better?

I gaze at the stone steps that climb up my spine, I would be a naked skeleton without the forest to grow mold on me, a path that leads up to my mind – life's greatest gift is where You exist to me, where everything I see of Your richness and beauty I want to consume, but the joy is in sharing what's true, and it is the search not the find that's golden. The words of a prayer book are just paper and ink, but when read, they call forth serene images and guide me to think. The moment of life's profound ecstasy and elation ebbs and flows, originating, from a hole in the ground where all life sprang and goes.

God I realize I have been searching for You in everything I do.

"But I'm not the one who is lost son, and now neither are you."

I rooted on my way to the bus, in a field of gold leaves, I'm told it's all God's Grove. I grow humble beans in briar and thorn – nothing great – rising next to a treasure trove of gold and jewels, people pass over me and stuff themselves with loot and greed, then, starving, die- rich and hungry. What is my job? My purpose? Am I meant to feed others to live fulfilled? Chasing Light is my Nature, I'll follow it into the Abyss – harvesting the love in dirt, a tadpole to a frog, a frog to a prince waiting for the heavenly kiss.

There is a room in my heart, with a view, for two. Raindrops fall tumbling off the thick wooden lips of trees and the stars strumming strings, sing, serenading the sun and the clouds below bridging the spiritual to the living with a rainbow, the beauty of life, and all those who Heed the call.

Each heart that drums a song, each breath drawn and colored in with crayon, God understands. I keep shouting to the crowd "I have captured you in my mind!" All that I do, my reason, my sense, my truth- I mine these thoughts digging deeper every time I think of You, proclaiming the delightful wonders, to dance with the band on the river bank, I flow trickling through the stirring stream of thoughts, the daughter of water, the sunlight of man. What do you see when you gaze into the mirror of destiny?

I ask "When I was enclosed, a candle in the Light, but separate from the source, I was not very bright, but now I am closer to you than ever before, rooted in the love of my Lord, a wooden traveler climbing the bare mountain steps of earth. The fruit I give birth to, is it ripe? – my Sun feeding on Your Light?

God, Do You Believe in me? Do You Believe in my Belief? Oh what a relief to let go and surrender my will and know You control all the World's program, it's good to be home after so long spent waiting in Superman's Phone Booth for a call that never came. We are His Voice rising up, thieves of our bodies returning the treasure back to the throne.

God, sticks on a branch grow beautifully, and I am wood whittled in the shape of a tree. If I never fell from Your Trunk, I wouldn't be carved in the likeness of the Source. I have been changed by an outside force, but all is beautiful, in the eyes of my Lord. Let me be the dew, the remainder of a morning melon squeezed, to hear Your Voice feed the grasses, let me feel the morning breeze blow moving the trees as they walk through the meadows and gaze at the fire in the sky they long to fuel.

The Conductor sweeps dirt, across the earth, is it a lie to season the truth with what I know? do I salt what is Holy to disguise its taste? or a fault of weakness to think I own my body? can a man bound to the earth, look temptation in the eyes and still rise? -a man ground to dirt? does dirt conceive true love without the root in it to feed? does dirt have to believe to be saved? - because I am dirt, of murky dirty mud, and I believe – Plant your seed in me. I am so Hungry! God, can You serve the beans?





Well What about a Halfway House?

By André Tucker

It sounds like and should be a good Idea. I think it's a good Idea because it's been so hard to convert back into the community. With everything being so expensive out there in the community, it's a hard life out there and there is need of a building that helps provide care and assistance to us for us. There's a new building going up, why not a Halfway House? It seems to be possible for this to happen, only question I have is when. I see it keeping the stress down and more time of getting ourselves together. It will provide more space and happiness to ESH. So bring in this idea to the right channel, it should open up a legitimate opportunity for a new transition to make sense out of this madness of being incarcerated. This will save us the trouble of messing up also.

- Good for ESH property
- Good for transition to work (on bus line & close to New Town)

**** Editor's Note: The PRB has written a letter to the Commissioner asking for some of the ESH land to go to the community services boards for a half-way house.***



Carnival Day

By Carolyn Sabo

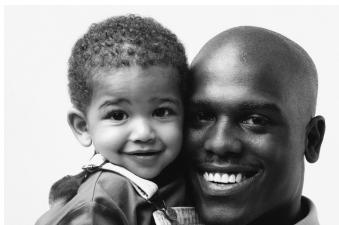
Carnival Day and what a Beautiful Day to be outside! People calling out, the smells of the food in the air; French Fries, chicken, hot dogs and of course cotton. Everywhere you turn you see a smile and hear laughter ringing all around you. The people were there playing cake walk, bean bag toss, slot machines and many other games. I sat idly by and sold raffle tickets. We sold over \$100 worth. There was a team of Jugglers one of whom also became a stilt man. The geriatrics patients won stuffed animals, toiletries, tote bags and other items. The weather was nice and we enjoyed ourselves until it ended and we all left happy to have come. The staff really did a wonderful job. Thank You all. T-shirts and a free food item were handed out to the patients who helped also.

Happy Father's Day!

I hope you know I'm missing you son
By André Tucker

Another year has passed and me and you still are not together. I'm keeping count although shame overcomes me with that question, "Where have you been dad?" What excuse do I have this time for not being there for you? Only thing I can say now is, "I can't." It hurt me to say that to you but don't look for another daddy that can. I struggle with these thoughts of who's going to teach you the things that will keep you out of trouble. These things got to be covered by us your parents, so that you don't miss much on your learning curve. This is why I'm here to tell and direct you from being killed or locked up son, I Love you and only want the very best for you. Oh how I would Love to hear you call me dad and ask any question you want and I will answer to the best of my knowledge. There's questions that I have for you too. So if I could talk to you I would say, Be good and stay away from trouble,

Love,
Your Dad





TLC Celebration Party

By Donna Leone

The party began at 3:30 pm on May 31st with a guest list of 47 people, including guests from other buildings who arrived in vans. Grocery shopping was done; decorations were placed on each table consisting of balloons saying "congrats" and "Happy Birthday" and centerpieces of sparkly red, white and blue. Along with Randy at the grill, plenty of hamburgers, hotdogs, all the fixings, potato salad, cole slaw, and baked beans, KFC chicken and chocolate and vanilla ice cream and cookies, we proceeded to celebrate the TLC's 3rd anniversary. Music was provided by Shawn Claitt in the courtyard. After the eating was over, residents and guests gathered around a delicious 2-layer cake with strawberry filling provided by Laura Dollieslager. It was decorated with clowns, balloons and a large sun with the words, "Happy Birthday TLC." We all thanked Karen Marsh-Williams for all the help and all she's done for us in the past three years. She has truly always been there for us all. Wishing the party to go on until the moonlit hours was considered, but the party ended at 6:30. All the guests were escorted back to their buildings.

TLC member quotes:

"It's been alright." ~ Stanley Picott

"Freedom." ~ Sandra Bake

"I think it's a nice place. IT is a very fun place to be. I like the activities."

~ Florence Blankenship

"TLC is a rewarding experience everyone should get the chance to try out. It was a wonderful experience to participate in the party. I enjoyed it a lot. Fun!"

~ Carolyn Sabo



Shout- Outs **By André Tucker**

Randy Hamrick for all the wonderful things you do and especially for all the cooking at the party.

From the Roving PRB resident satisfaction survey in building 24, the following individuals were given shout-outs due to their support for individual recovery efforts:

Nanette Brett (4 shout outs), Jessie (4 shout outs), Suzy , Cindy Ruehl, Marilyn, Tom Hibler, Matt Johnson, Dr. Tate, Scott Turner, Dee Martin, Wilma, Jackie, Napoleon, Ms. Chavers, , Dr. Justin, Joy Clemens, Ms. Cherry, Dr. Jones, Dr. McMahon, Dr. Ewell, and Sacha Ostroff. Thank you for your support!

PATIENT RESPONSE BOARD

What has the PRB accomplished so far?

- We have a representative on the Regional Consumer Advocacy Group
- We got a crosswalk sign in front of building 2 to keep us safer
- We are starting a Green Committee
- We donated money to NAMI and became a sponsor for the run/walk
- We started a book club
- We received mats for under the ice machines in the canteen and the cafeteria
- We got mailboxes put in every building so your comments reach us easily.
- Community PRB meetings in the buildings so everyone can have a voice

Some of the things the PRB is working on:

- A Recovery Quilt or tiles made up of your designs to be displayed in the new building
- Improved programming on evenings, holidays and weekends
- On ward activities run by the peer support specialists
- Computers for patient use in the buildings

The Patient Response Board represents every single resident. If you have any questions or concerns, or you would like to be a member, drop us a line in our mailbox!

THE PIONEER PRESS WANTS YOU TO...

EXPRESS YOUR CREATIVITY!!!

Submit your questions, comments, original artwork, poetry, performance reviews, wish list of things you would like to see happen or changed, "Shout-outs" for staff or any other articles*. Place your submissions in the labeled mailbox in the lobby of the resident buildings or in the library. You will be asked to sign a release so that we are able to publish your work. If you'd rather not sign such a release, then we will use only your initials on your by-line.

*Newsletter will not be complaining, accusatory, or inflammatory.

GOT COFFEE?

WE DO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Get it while it's hot!



Starts July 11th 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Mondays and Fridays

Outside Group Room #3 in the Davis Building

Cost: \$1 per cup

Refills: \$.75 for staff, \$.50 for residents

Entertainment

By Dilita Clements

Jet Magazine's Top Ten Albums

1. A Girl Like Me (Rihanna)
2. Chris Brown (Chris Brown)
3. My Ghetto Report Card (E-40-Sick wid it)
4. Todd Smith (LLCool J – def Jam)
5. The Breakthrough (Mary J. Blidge)
6. Director (Avant)
7. Reality Check (Juvenile)
8. Unpredictable (Jamie Foxx)
9. Most Known Unknown (3'6 mafia)
10. Ain't Nobody Worryin (Anthony Hamilton)

Be on the look out for:

Mariah Carey MC² – Touch My Body
The Carter III – Lollipop
50 Cent – Get Rich or Die Tryin
Trina – Glamorest Life

New Couples:

Rihanna and Chris Brown
Janet Jackson and Jermaine Dupri
Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon



Baby Boomers:

Tori Spelling – one son and one on the way
Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony – twins
Halle Berry and Gabriell – son
Beyonce and Jay Z – expecting (rumor)
Christina Agueillara- baby boy
Brittany Spears and Kevin Federline – two boys
Angie Stone and D'Angelo – baby boy
Faith Evans and Biggie Smalls – baby boy
Usher and Tameka – baby boy



RIP

Gerald Levert, Johnny Cochran, Luther Vandross, James Brown, Redd Fox, Lisa (left eye) Lopez, Aaliyah, Freaky Ty from The Lost Boys, D.J. Flex, Big Punisher.

Farewell and please forgive me if I forgot you. ☺

Watch Out For:

BET awards will air intermittently throughout the month of July!

Resident Satisfaction Survey
Building 24
29 completed surveys

- 1) I feel / felt safe in the hospital.
Mostly Yes 17 59%
- 2) The areas I observed during my stay were clean and properly maintained.
Mostly Yes 17 59%
- 3) I feel / felt free to express my opinions or concerns.
Mostly Yes 16 55%
- 4) This hospital stay is helping / has helped me to learn better coping skills
Mostly Yes 19 66%
- 5) I am allowed to tell my treatment team if I disagree with my treatment and they respect my input. That doesn't mean that they have to do everything I say or that everything should be my way but that I feel that my team is listening and letting me participate in my treatment planning.
Mostly Yes 20 69%
- 6) My team doesn't just tell me what I should do upon discharge, I get to tell them what I'd like to do. For example, they ask me how many times a week I would like to attend AA.
Mostly Yes 14 48% Mostly No 8 28% I don't know 7 24%
- 7) I am being/was treated with respect and dignity while in the hospital.
Mostly Yes 20 69%
- 8) I feel that I am on the road to my recovery as a result of coming to the hospital.
Mostly Yes 24 83%
- 9) I feel hope.
Mostly Yes 21 72%
- 10) I understand what Recovery is and am working towards my Recovery.
Mostly Yes 23 79%
- 11) I am / was given, and understand, the information I need(ed) about:
 - a) my illness. **Mostly Yes 17 59%**
 - b) my medications. **Mostly Yes 19 66%**
 - c) why I take medications. **Mostly Yes 21 72%**
 - d) my diagnosis. **Mostly Yes 17 59%**
 - e) the symptoms of my illness. **Mostly Yes 18 62%**
 - f) why I was hospitalized. **Mostly Yes 18 62%**
 - g) my discharge plan. **Mostly Yes 17 59%**
 - h) groups/activities available. **Mostly Yes 17 59%**
- 14) I would like to share the following information to improve resident satisfaction.
 More exercise groups, more information regarding Recovery/symptoms, Respect us and treat us like individuals/adults not like children, give us more to do on the wards, tell us more about why we act the way we do (Psychology), more time with trained professionals (psychiatry and psychology), when we think we're mad about something we need to think twice about saying how we feel

LHRC Membership Announcement

The Eastern State Hospital Local Human Rights Committee (LHRC) is soliciting members for appointment. The Eastern State Hospital LHRC is a committee of community volunteers that broadly represent various professional, consumer and advocacy groups with an interest in Mental Health, Mental Retardation or Substance Abuse issues.

The LHRC is a diverse group and we welcome all interested members of the community to apply for membership. Consumers of mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services are especially encouraged to apply. The Committee meets on a monthly basis.

Please call **Gianna Mitchell, Human Rights Advocate at 757-253-4220** for an application. Deadline for submittal is **July 10, 2008**. A personal interview will be required for all applicants initially selected. Final decisions on appointments are made by the State Human Rights Committee. Send all completed applications to:

Gianna Mitchell, Human Rights Advocate
C/O OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS
Eastern State Hospital
4601 Ironbound Road
Williamsburg, VA 23188-2652



Nutrition Facts

By Florence Blankenship

During this heat wave, it is important to drink plenty of water. Even during average temperatures, you should drink water regularly, practically every hour throughout the day. If you are thirsty, you are already at least two cups below what your body needs.

Water makes up about 60% of your body weight and is involved in almost every process that is essential for life. Water:

1. Moistens tissues such as those in the mouth, eyes and nose.
2. Protects body organs and tissues.
3. Helps prevent constipation.
4. Helps dissolve minerals and other nutrients to make them accessible to the body.
5. Regulates body temperature.
6. Lubricates joints.
7. Lessens the burden on the kidneys and liver by flushing out waste products.
8. Carries nutrients and oxygen to cells.

We get water also from foods such as lettuce, tomatoes, watermelon, broccoli, milk, juice, carrots, apples, cottage cheese, yogurt and bananas. All foods have a certain percentage of water. The average diet provides about 20% of the total water intake for a day. Make sure you are getting the fluids you need to sustain optimum health.